

**Amendments to the Claims**

The listing of claims below replaces all prior versions and listings in the application.

Claim 1. (currently amended) A rope ladder facilitating escape from a building during an emergency comprising:

(a) a hook; and

(b) a ladder body comprising:

(i) a pair of flexible belt rails disposed in a parallel fashion and each fixed at one end to said hook;

(ii) a plurality of rungs disposed between and separately attached to said belts rails; and

(iii) a plurality of support attachments symmetrically fixed onto the back of said belts rails, said support attachments attached where said rungs are attached to said belt rails, each said support attachment having a spacer plate which is rotatable with respect to said rungs and said belt rails so as to project from said rope ladder when said rope ladder is extended.

Claim 2. (currently amended) The rope ladder of claim 1, wherein each said support attachment comprises:

(1) a base plate fixed where said rung is attached to said belt rail; and

~~(2)~~ a said spacer plate that articulates relative to said base plate via a pivot pin residing within a torsion spring which connects said base plate to said spacer plate, said torsion spring rotating said spacer plate until a stop along said spacer plate

contacts a positioning limiting boss on said base plate, said spacer plate at an angle larger than 90 degrees with respect to said base plate when deployed by said torsion spring.

Claim 3. (original) The rope ladder as in claim 1 or 2, wherein said hook comprises:

(1) a U-shaped hook body and two L-shaped hooks, said U-shaped hook body having a pair of first horizontal bars disposed about and attached to a vertical U-shaped element, said L-shaped hooks each having a vertical bar attached to a second horizontal bar, each said first horizontal bar having a plurality of holes and each said second horizontal bar having two bolts projecting there from and aligned to pass through two of said holes, each said L-shaped hook attached to said U-shaped hook body by tightening a butterfly nut onto each of said bolts.

Claim 4. (original) The rope ladder as in claim 1 or 2, wherein said support attachments are provided at each said rung.

Claim 5. (original) The rope ladder as in claim 1 or 2, wherein said support attachments are provided at every third or forth said rung.

Claim 6. (original) The rope ladder as in claim 1 or 2, wherein said rungs are comprised of an aluminum alloy having a fire-retardant textile band thereon.

**Arguments Against Rejections**

Claims 1 and 2 are presently amended. Amended claims are supported by original specification, figures, and claims. Arguments are presented in light of amendments made to claims 1 and 2.

***CLAIM REJECTIONS – 35 U.S.C. § 102 & 35 U.S.C. § 103***

*Claims 1, 4, and 5 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Dibelardino et al. (USPN 6,334,510).*

*Claim 6 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Dibelardino et al. (USPN 6,334,510) in view of Dowe (USPN 6,382,352).*

The rejections are traversed.

By way of background, claims 2 and 3 are objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. Claim 2 includes a base plate fixed where each rung is attached to the belt rail and a spacer plate which articulates relative to the base plate via a pivot pin residing within a torsion spring which connects the base plate to the spacer plate. Accordingly, claim 2 is allowable because of the articulating or rotatable feature of the spacer plate.

Dibelardino et al. (USPN 6,334,510) describes and claims integral stand-off projections 6 which are disposed in a fixed arrangement to each rung, as shown in FIGS. 5(a), 5(b), 6(a), 6(b), 7, and 8.

Arnette et al. (USPN 6,530,455) describes and claims standoffs 32 which are disposed in

a fixed arrangement to each rung 30, as shown in FIGS. 1 and 10.

Dowe (USPN 6,382,352), Montecer (USPN 6,651,776), and Burt (USPN 3,385,399) neither describe nor claim standoffs, stand-off projections, spacer plates, or the like.

Amended claim 1 now requires each support attachment to have a spacer plate which is rotatable with respect to the rungs and belt rails so as to project from the rope ladder when the rope ladder is extended. Accordingly, amended claim 1 and all dependent claims are neither anticipated by nor obvious in light of the referenced art.

For the reasons stated herein, it is respectfully submitted that Section 102(b) and Section 103(a) rejections are misplaced, and reconsideration and withdrawal of the same is respectfully requested.